

**Spanish Hope and Recovery Conference**  
**By Catherine Bond, Director, Empowerment & Advocacy Division**



More than 300 clients attended the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Conferencia Esperanza y Recuperación on July 11, 2012, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Culver City. The conference, presented in Spanish with English interpretation where needed, is a one-day event designed by a committee of clients with technical assistance from the Program Support Bureau. The Mistress of Ceremonies for the conference was Blanca DeLeon from the Northeast Wellness Center.



Five of the 13 exhibitor tables were hosted by representatives from DMH: Service Area 5, Northeast Wellness Center, Patients Rights, Transition Age Youth, and Countywide Housing, Employment and Education Resource

Development.



Conference highlights included a Zumba session led by members from El Centrito de Apoyo in Huntington Park, and a slide show of photos from past conferences accompanied by the conference theme song “Amigo.” Two programs were honored, *Angels on Call* from the Northeast Wellness Center and *El Centrito de Apoyo* from Project Return Peer Support Network.



A lively question and answer segment followed the *Ask the Director* presentation by Dr. Tony Beliz, and an inspirational plenary address was given by Juan Velez Court. Juan is the founder of the *Our Mind Foundation* of Puerto Rico, and his presentation included the showing of a video he had produced based on his life,

*Pensar Eterno.*



The afternoon program featured four workshops: WRAP in Spanish, Stigma in the Latina Community, Spirituality and Mental Health, and Project HOME Los Angeles, followed by a play, *El Balance Es La Llave En La Vida*, written by Gloria Trujillo and performed by her and her peers.